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 IPS by APB obtained not obt Date 9-15-16

DATE: April 1, 1977
 TIME: 16:30 - 17:00
 PLACE: USIS Buenos Aires

PARTICIPANTS: Ms. Patricia Derian, Human Rights and
 Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator-
 Designate, Department of State
 Mr. Martin McReynolds, UPI Bureau,
 Buenos Aires
 Mrs. Katharine Ray, Information Officer
 Buenos Aires

Mr. McReynolds had expressed interest in meeting with Ms. Derian and agreed to brief her on his own observations of Argentina today. He asked not to be quoted on any of his comments. Points made by him included:

1. When Ms. Derian asked him what he thinks the outlook for Argentina is, he replied that he doesn't know, although he is troubled - and thinks the Argentines don't know either.

"This government is not terribly strong in its hold on power and whether the absence of Videla would lead to something worse in the government would be hard to tell."

2. "Elections now would be a horrible mess. Political alternatives to the military government are not viable." The Peronists are still strong as a group but "they have never understood what democracy means." The Radical party, made up of people who are, comparatively speaking, honest and decent, has no real chance of getting into power. "They have neither the backing nor the leadership."

3. The UPI Bureau here keeps a "body count" of victims resulting from the continued struggle between guerrillas and security forces. Its unofficial total for 1976 was 1,380 bodies. That total, it believes, included 868 guerrillas killed by security forces; 164 members of security forces killed by guerrillas; 247 bullet-ridden bodies which could not be identified; 35 executives believed to have been killed by leftist terrorists; and 66 "miscellaneous" persons, who just happened to be killed in confrontations, by bombs exploding, stray bullets, etc.

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